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Young Israel's new rabbi page 9

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www.ottawajewishbulletin.com

february 23, 2009

volume 73, no. 9

shevat 29, 5769

Ottawa Jewish Bulletin Publishing Co. Ltd. • 21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 1R9 • Publisher: Mitchell Bellman • Editor: Michael Regenstreif \$2.00

Votes in, but real winner still uncertain

By Leslie Susser

Editor's note: This article was written February 11, the day after the Israeli election. Because of the Family Day holiday, this edition of the Bulletin went to press early on February 13. Some of the future consultations and discussions that are referred to may have already taken place by the time you read this.

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Although nearly all the votes have been counted, it's still not clear who has really won the Israeli election.

Tzipi Livni's Kadima emerged as the largest single party, but the right-wing parliamentary bloc, led by Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu,

captured the majority of the Knesset seats. Kadima appears to have won 28 seats to the Likud's 27, but altogether the right-wing and religious bloc captured 65 seats in the 120-member Knesset.

At election night celebrations February 10, both sides claimed victory.

Indeed, given the mixed result, both Livni and Netanyahu have a chance to become Israel's next prime minister. Like two poker players in a high-stakes game, it could depend on who blinks first.

The strength in Netanyahu's hand is that he has the votes to form a coalition with the hawks, at least some of whom Livni needs to form one consisting mostly of

doves. The snag for Netanyahu is that he desperately does not want to form a narrow right-wing government that would be isolated on the international stage.

Livni's strength is in the moral victory of her party having won the most seats and the fact that Israel's president, who has the role of designating who gets the first crack at forming a government, almost always gives the leader of the largest party the initial opportunity.

Unfortunately for Livni, the law clearly states that the task should be conferred on the Knesset member with the best chance of success. To determine who that may be, the president is supposed to consult with all the parties represented in parliament. If Netanyahu can keep his bloc together, a majority will recommend him to President Shimon Peres in post-election consultations.

Still, the game is far from over.

Livni can pressure Netanyahu by refusing to take part in any government he leads, leaving him only with the right-wingers. Netanyahu can pressure Livni by refusing to join a national unity government she leads, denying her a working majority in parliament. Both sides want a national unity government that cuts across the right-left divide; the standoff is over who leads it.

(Continued on page 2)

Hillel Academy and YRHS move toward amalgamation

By Nicola Hamer

Hillel Academy communications director

The Hillel Academy building is bustling with activity these days. Yitzhak Rabin High School (YRHS) has moved in. The two sets of student bodies and teachers are getting to know each other and learning to work together toward the common goal of academic excellence.

It has been announced that Hillel Academy and YRHS are moving toward amalgamation and will form one, seamless, day school encompassing kindergarten to Grade 12. The process will be slow and careful, and will involve carefully examining the curriculum of both schools.

Our general studies curriculum is prescribed by the Ontario government, although we do have flexibility within the mandate. Our Judaic studies program, however, is something that developed at Hillel Academy over the years. Although we are very proud of our cur-

(Continued on page 2)



Supporters of Tzipi Livni in Tel Aviv celebrate the Kadima leader's apparent victory in Israeli elections on February 10.

(JTA Photo: Brian Hendler)



Kole Cantor distributes challah for the kindergarten Shabbat program at Hillel Academy.

(Photo: Nicola Hamer)

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Can leaders build a coalition to meet Israel's needs?

(Continued from page 1)

Yisrael Beiteinu's Avigdor Lieberman could be holding the ace.

With 15 seats, Yisrael Beiteinu is now the third-largest party in the Knesset, ahead of Labor, which won only 13.

Although normally counted in the right-wing bloc because of his hard line against terror and harsh statements on Israeli Arabs, Lieberman says he is keeping his options open.

Indeed, on some issues Lieberman could find common ground with Livni. For example, both may favour changing the electoral system and introducing a form of civil marriage in Israel – issues that resonate powerfully among Lieberman's heavily Russian immigrant support base. Lieberman could get more on these issues from Livni, who has no fealty to the religious parties, than from Netanyahu, who is committed to including the Orthodox Shas in his government.

Shas is adamantly opposed both to electoral reform and civil marriage, which would end exclusive Orthodox religious control over marriage in Israel. During the campaign, Shas spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef described casting a ballot for Lieberman as "a vote for the devil." In his election night speech, Lieberman vowed to get even.

It was significant that Livni's first informal coalition meeting February 11 was held with Lieberman. A few hours later, however, the Yisrael Beiteinu leader met with Netanyahu.

When push comes to shove, Lieberman probably would find it difficult to de-



Supporters of Benjamin Netanyahu carry signs at the Machane Yehuda market in Jerusalem. (JTA Photo: Brian Hendler)

fect from the right-wing bloc to Livni's camp. Most pundits believe that the show of keeping his options open is merely a tactical ploy for Lieberman to get more from Netanyahu – possibly the post of defence minister – in return for eventually supporting the Likud leader. Indeed, Lieberman makes no secret of the fact that he feels part of the "national camp," and that, all things being equal, his clear preference would be for a right-wing government.

Another question mark over Lieberman is the fact that he is being investigated on serious fraud allegations. A ban on his serving in certain ministries could complicate coalition negotiations.

So what are the some of the coalition options?

• A narrow right-wing government led by Netanyahu and comprising Likud, Yisrael Beiteinu, Shas, United Torah Judaism, National Union and

Jewish Home. This 65-seat coalition would be a stable government, but would not give Netanyahu room to manoeuvre either on the Palestinian or Syrian peace tracks, and likely would be seen by the international community, including the new U.S. administration, as intransigent.

• Lieberman throws his support to Livni, who is able to bring Likud on board for an emergency national unity government for a fixed time period comprising Kadima, Yisrael Beiteinu, Likud and Labor – a total of 83 seats – dedicated to one goal: changing the electoral system. Livni, Netanyahu, Lieberman and Labor's Ehud Barak all said that the uncertain election results have underscored the need for reform.

• Livni blinks first and agrees to serve in a Netanyahu-led national unity government comprising Likud, Kadima, Yisrael Beiteinu, Shas and the religious National Home

Party – 83 seats.

• Netanyahu blinks first and agrees to serve in a sim-

ilar government but with rotation of the prime minister – Livni for two years and then Netanyahu for two years. This is the compromise many pundits think may emerge. It gives Livni a chance to be prime minister and allows Netanyahu to head a government with a degree of peacemaking leeway and greater international legitimacy. This was the model adopted in 1984 by Shimon Peres, then head of the Labor Party, and Likud's Yitzhak Shamir. The difference then was that the two blocs, centre-left and religious-right, were actually tied at 60-60.

Both Livni and Netanyahu would like to bring Labor into a governing constellation, with Barak as defence minister, given the huge regional challenges Is-

rael faces, especially the Iranian nuclear threat. But, because of Labor's poor showing in the election, the predominant feeling within Labor is that the party should stay in the opposition to rebuild.

Given these unprecedented election results, will Israel's leaders be able to build a coalition to meet the country's complex needs – a looming Iranian nuclear threat, terrorist groups armed with rockets on its northern and southern borders and a potentially crippling economic crisis? Or will they have to agree on terms for changing the electoral system first?

What Livni and Netanyahu do could be crucial not only for the short-term, but for Israel's long-term well-being.

School to be envy of Ottawa

(Continued from page 1)

rent success, we believe now is the time to take our Judaic curriculum to the next level.

The Judaic curriculum at Hillel is more complicated than many realize. The students learn the holidays and Hebrew language, and they also learn Mishnah, Torah, Prophets and Jewish history. In Grades 1 to 4, Hillel uses Tal Am, an award-winning educational program developed in Canada, to teach Hebrew.

The school also holds a Judaic/Torah Fair every two years for Grades 4 to 8. This allows the students to explore areas of particular interest.

The Judaic program goes beyond the curriculum, however. Israel advocacy is very significant at both Hillel Academy and YRHS. Both schools are involved in the

P2K program, which twins them with schools in northern Israel. Thanks to a recent donation, technical upgrades have allowed the schools to communicate with their twinned Israeli schools using our state-of-the-art video conferencing equipment.

This deeper connection with Israel allows teachers to more easily educate their students about current events. It also helps develop conversational Hebrew, which is emphasized in the upper grades. By helping students connect to kids their own age in Israel, Hillel and YRHS help to take Hebrew and Judaism beyond the classroom setting.

Taking their Judaism out of the classroom and making it part of the everyday life of the students is also something the schools emphasize. *Tikkun Olam* – repairing the world – is an important concept for students, both in theory and practice. In the younger grades, the children start small, doing things like visiting Hillel Lodge at Purim in their costumes.

In the older grades, the students get more involved in volunteering at Hillel Lodge and in the community-at-large. The older students are also learning that they can do a lot to help the younger

ones.

Hillel Academy and Yitzhak Rabin High School are both very proud of their Judaic studies programs. They put a great deal of effort into educating the students in the language, the holidays, Torah and the philosophy of being Jewish. However, we do recognize that there is always room for improvement, and have been working hard, as we integrate the two schools, to find areas of improvement.

We have hired a consultant in Jewish education to evaluate both schools, as well as a curriculum consultant. They will help us with both a smooth amalgamation and in finding ways to build upon our successes.

We will continue to improve how we deliver the Judaic content to our students, as well as find ways to integrate our secular and Jewish components to provide both the best Jewish education and the best all-around education available. Our school plans to become the envy of Ottawa.

Editor's note: This is the fourth in a continuing series of articles being prepared by Nicola Hamer on the revitalization of Jewish education in Ottawa.

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Will When Bibi met Barack have a happy ending?

By Ron Kampeas
WASHINGTON (JTA)
When Bibi met Barack there was chemistry, the story goes. Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu first met then-Senator Barack Obama in a private meeting in 2007, during one of Netanyahu's stateside visits.

The pair met a second time last July, in Jerusalem, and both with their country's top jobs in their sights. Obama had secured the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, while Netanyahu had revived his Likud Party from a slump and was leading in polls to succeed the scandal-tainted Ehud Olmert, who, days later, announced his resignation as prime minister.

Obama won his race in November, and Netanyahu's campaign took on Obama's hues, adopting the slogan of "change" for Israel and erect-

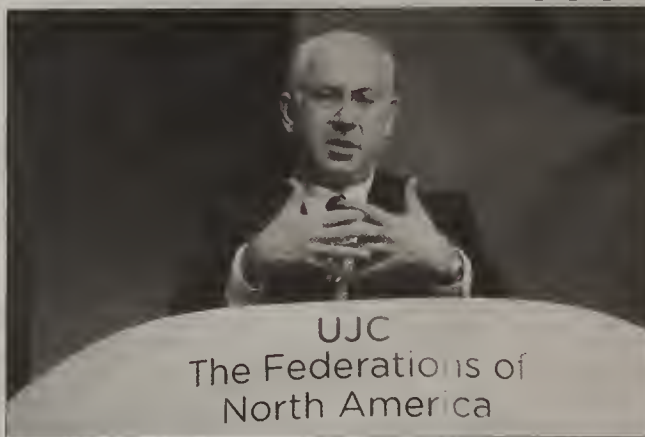
ing a campaign website that mimicked Obama's.

Or so the story goes.

This version, accurate if not quite complete, is being peddled behind the scenes in Washington by those keen on seeing a smooth relationship between Jerusalem and Washington if Netanyahu becomes Israel's prime minister, which remains a possibility after the right wing's strong showing in this month's election. Netanyahu and Obama may not agree on the details, they say, but see eye-to-eye when it comes to the big picture.

If Netanyahu becomes prime minister, this will be his second time around, and survivors from his 1996-99 dalliance with the Clinton administration are not only around, they are members of Obama's new administration.

Dennis Ross, President Bill Clinton's top Middle



Polls predicted Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party would win Israel's election, but Kadima took one more seat in the February 10 vote. (JTA Photo: Brian Hendler)

East peace negotiator, is expected to take up a Middle East policy overseer slot at the State Department – headed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the former first lady.

In his mammoth 2004 account of his struggle for peace, "The Missing Peace," Ross describes the then-Israeli prime minister as "nearly insufferable" in his first

meeting with Clinton.

"After Netanyahu was gone, President Clinton observed, 'He thinks he is the superpower and we are here to do what he requires,'" Ross writes. "No one on our side disagreed with that assessment."

It doesn't stop there: In his dealings with Ross, Netanyahu comes across as needy, manipulative, unreliable and, perhaps worst of all, a party pooper. At the end of the exhausting 1998 Wye River negotiations, Ross reflects on Netanyahu's constant moving of the goal posts, including a sudden last-minute demand for the release of convicted Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard.

"Bibi has already robbed us of the joy of reaching agreement," Ross tells an associate.

Martin Indyk, the U.S. ambassador to Israel at the time Netanyahu was first elected, and now an informal adviser to Hillary Clinton, is no kinder. In "Innocent Abroad," his just-published account of the Clinton years, Indyk describes how Clinton and his staff eagerly hoped for Netanyahu's defeat in 1996. Clinton resented Netanyahu in part because, as Israeli opposition leader, he had agitated against Clinton's support of the Rabin-Peres talks with Syria.

Indyk calls Netanyahu's term "the winter of our peace process discontent."

Some of these resentments

have been assumed by the Obama team. Obama himself, meeting with Jewish leaders in Cleveland a year ago, described "a strain within the pro-Israel community that says unless you adopt an unwavering pro-Likud approach to Israel, then you're anti-Israel, and that can't be the measure of our friendship with Israel."

Centrist pro-Israel insiders say Netanyahu has matured in the interim and has foregone the clumsy attempts at interference in the U.S. political system that characterized his first term, including openly courting Clinton's evangelical enemies. Additionally, Obama and Netanyahu genuinely get along, unlike Clinton and Netanyahu, who never clicked.

Furthermore, these insiders argue, Netanyahu's bottom-up approach to Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking parallels that of General James Jones, Obama's national security adviser. Both have said in recent interviews that they favour building infrastructure before advancing to final-status talks.

"We must fundamentally improve the lives of our Palestinian neighbours so that they have a stake in peace," Netanyahu told the *Chicago Tribune* recently. "We need to help Palestinians expand their middle class, strengthen their civil society and provide hope for a better future."

Obama's envoy to the region, George Mitchell, appears to be adopting that cautious approach.

Possible differences loom, however.

In the previous Bush administration, Jones was the patron of the rehabilitation of Palestinian armed forces in the West Bank; Netanyahu is adamant about demilitarization. In the past, Mitchell has emphasized a settlement freeze; acceding would infuriate much of Netanyahu's Likud Party, never mind any right-wing parties he brings with him into his government.

Differences are emerging as well on Iran, the very issue (Continued on page 27)

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Kadima leader Tzipi Livni celebrating her lead in Israel's election Feb. 10.
(JTA Photo: Brian Hendler)

Livni, lacking baggage, would find friends in D.C.

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Tzipi Livni lacks familiarity with the senior figures in the Obama administration — that may be a plus.

Livni's Kadima Party emerged as the leader in this month's election in Israel, a surprise given the lead that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Likud leader, had shown in the polls.

While it remains unclear, at press time, who will be Israel's next prime minister — despite Kadima's victory, the Likud-led right-wing bloc has a majority of seats in Israel's parliament — it seems apparent who the Obama administration in Washington would prefer to see in the prime minister's office, even if members of the administration have not said so explicitly.

"The American political establishment would prefer to have Tzipi to Bibi," said Steven Spiegel, a scholar with the Israel Policy Forum, using Netanyahu's familiar nickname. "She's a person who is seen as moderate; she's seen as the most likely to cooperate with the administration; there's admiration for her feistiness. She's not known like Bibi or Ehud Barak, but that means she'll get the benefit of the doubt."

Livni, 50, enjoyed good relations with the Bush administration, particularly with then-secretary of state Condoleezza Rice. However, eight years ago, the last time Democrats occupied the White House, Livni was a little-known Likud Party Knesset backbencher known for little more than being effective on political talk shows.

But, after an election that held the possibility of a return to the tense relations between a Democratic White House and Likud-led Israel, when Netanyahu was prime minister from 1996 to 1999, Livni might be a breath of fresh air.

"It's clear that the Obama administration would be more comfortable with Tzipi Livni as prime minister of Israel because she at least talks about the issues that are important to the

Obama administration, such as restarting the peace process and reaching an agreement with the Palestinians," said Haim Malka, an analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "She doesn't have the same kind of political baggage and history that Bibi has." (See story page 4.)

Livni's reputation is that of a reliable political ally. As foreign minister under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, she hewed to the parameters of the peace talks that Rice had revived, backing Rice's efforts to engage intensively with the moderate West Bank-based leadership of the Palestinian Authority and pressing in Israel for the opening of the Gaza Strip border crossings.

Netanyahu ran on a pledge to slow down the peace process, just when the Obama administration was determined to speed it up.

Dovish pro-Israel groups were vocal in their relief at the notion that Livni at least had a chance of forming a coalition and leading Israel's next government.

"These results are encouraging," said Ori Nir, spokesman for Americans for Peace Now. "They are much better than what polls have recently shown. The efforts of the next few days and weeks to form a government coalition will hopefully make this night a victory for the path of negotiations and peace over the nationalist, dogmatic agenda of the hawkish right and the extreme right."

Diane Balsler, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom's executive director, echoed Nir.

"We welcome preliminary reports that Tzipi Livni has led her party, Kadima, to electoral victory, as we do the clear implication of these results that the Israeli electorate remains committed to a negotiated, two-state resolution to the conflict," she said.

Mainstream Jewish groups were more circumspect, preferring to wait out the grueling negotiations over who would lead the new government.

(Continued on page 27)



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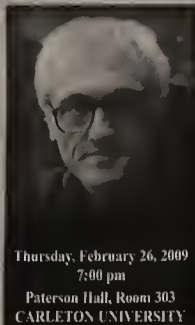
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Dr. Jan T. Gross is one of the foremost experts on Polish society during the Second World War and the Holocaust and is currently a member of the Princeton University faculty. This lecture will draw on material from his most recent book, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz* (2006).

Dr. Jan T. Gross est un des experts les plus notables concernant la société polonaise durant la Seconde guerre mondiale et l'Holocauste et est actuellement un membre de la faculté de l'Université de Princeton.

La présentation en question va s'inspirer de son oeuvre la plus récente, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz* (2006).

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Hillel Ottawa: Exploding success means increased need

Hillel Ottawa is the foundation and the address for Jewish campus life. We provide the tools and resources to Jewish students so they can build their part of a vibrant Jewish community. Ultimately, we strive to strengthen the Jewish community by strengthening Jewish identity, culture and tradition in our students and young adults.

We support our student leaders, professionals and lay leaders in their dedication to creating a pluralistic, welcoming, inclusive environment where Jewish students are encouraged to grow intellectually, spiritually and socially. Hillel helps students find a balance between being distinctively Jewish and universally human.

Hillel is committed to excellence, innovation, accountability and results. We are also the umbrella organization for the Israel Awareness Committee, which battles anti-Israel sentiments on campus, creates dynamic Israel activists, teaches Jewish and non-Jewish students about political and historical Israel and promotes programs and missions to Israel.

Hillel activities aim to promote Jewish values, identity and education. We do this



Federation Report

Linda Kerzner and Alana Kayfetz
Hillel Ottawa – The Foundation
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through a wide variety of programs – more than 50 per semester – including recreational, social and educational events, speakers, Israel advocacy, leadership training, Birthright, Shabbat dinners, outreach and engagement.

Student volunteers and their volunteer boards are the backbone of our organization. Our partners and subgroups include Jewish law, medical and graduate students associations, as well as Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity.

Hillel Ottawa has been increasingly successful over the past couple of years on many fronts.

We have increased student participation in programming by 40 per cent and Hillel has a strong leadership base with dedicated

student volunteers, passionate about Jewish campus life, who are growing into community leaders. We now have a Hillel House where Jewish students gather, learn, socialize, study or just hang out. We see significant numbers of new faces at each program and are retaining those students for multiple programs. We are creating Israel advocates who are prepared to meet the daily challenges of representing Zionism on campus. They are well armed with the facts they need on the front lines of university student centres.

However, this explosion of Jewish life on campus comes at a price. We must align our funding with the changing times so that our programs and services reflect and meet the

need of our students.

We estimate that there are 2,000 Jewish university and college students in Ottawa. We're now reaching 900 students, about 45 per cent of our target population. We reach 22 per cent of our students through Shabbat dinners alone.

Despite our increasing success, we are unable to meet all of the needs of our growing Jewish population on campus due to our limited human and financial resources. We employ just two staff, one of whom is focused entirely on Israel advocacy on campus.

Among our other major challenges are: increased incidents of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism on campus; accessing first year students before they satisfy their sense of belonging by aligning themselves elsewhere; Jewish students making the choice to step back from their roots; and, the need for increased profile and visibility on campus so we are easy to find.

We have access to the programs, services and professional expertise to address these needs. It is all a question of resources – both human and financial. Please get involved. Contact us at 613-236-2345.

Integration: A Jewish educational model

We are witnessing an interesting dichotomy in the Jewish community today.

On one hand, there is an increased desire on the part of many adults to increase their Jewish educational knowledge, as seen through the proliferation of ancient text translations into English and the success of ventures such as Melton, Limmud, Kollel and others. One is intrigued that a local university hosted a lecture on the ArtScroll phenomenon, which has revolutionized Jewish learning for the English-speaking Jewish population in North America and elsewhere.

In contrast, the steady decline in day school enrolment is a disturbing phenomenon. Equally perturbing is the statistic that shows few day school graduates are pursuing high school Jewish education. The recent figure showing only six per cent of potential Jewish high school students studying in Ottawa's Jewish secondary schools is pathetic, to say the least.

Invariably, the question has to be asked as to why so few continue their Jewish studies after day school. One reason constantly cited is that few find their elementary Jewish studies relevant to their lives. They, therefore, do not see the need to continue what seemingly appears to be more drudgery and meaningless study. It is unfortunate students feel that way, because the greatest opportunities for Jewish educational success lie in high school education and beyond.

As students mature, their educational horizons begin to broaden, and the opportunity to engage them in serious study about how their faith impacts and comments on today's societal issues awaits them. A



From the pulpit

Rabbi
Howard Finkelstein
Beit Tikvah

number of illustrations come to mind, especially in the areas of business and medical ethics.

The recent Bernard Madoff scandal, which has traumatized many, lends itself to intelligent, sophisticated discussion from a Jewish ethical point of view. A class in business, or in entrepreneurship, can be transformed into a Jewish educational opportunity as Jewish ethical thought comes to bear on what has happened on Wall Street and in the economy. Especially in regard to the evils of avarice and greed that we have seen played out in the United States, and the role that government should or should not play in these matters.

Serious issues of end-of-life decisions which affect many caregivers, as well as patients, must be discussed in a Jewish ethical framework. High school Jewish education can and should deal with these and similar areas.

In other words, we are looking at the concept of integration as an integral part of Jewish education, a process that is now utilized at Yitzhak Rabin High School in both the Judaic and secular programs. Our students see the relevance of Judaism to matters of contemporary interest and concern. Judaism, then, becomes a living faith for the students.


Integration has potential in the elementary schools as well, albeit on a more rudimentary level. The messages of our Torah and tradition transcend time and place. With proper training and direction, teachers can demonstrate the relevance of text to their students.

Old school methods of Torah instruction based on chapter and verse interpretation do not sit well with most students today. While more religiously oriented students continue to learn successfully and benefit from traditional methods of instruction in Torah, Talmud and Dinim, the vast majority of students in our day schools are not learning through these methods. Hence, there is a need for reassessment of pedagogical

techniques with a look toward integration of Judaic and secular studies.

My alma mater, Yeshiva University, proclaims its motto as *Torah Umadda* – Torah and science – two important components in the education of the student. There, the emphasis is placed on the concept of synthesis of the two fields of study. Similarly, we speak today of the necessity of integration in order to achieve the maximum benefit for the maximum number of students.

As we are progressing in every educational endeavour, we dare not falter in our goal to create a new generation of educated Jewish students who shall lead us and their respective communities in the future.



Owned by The Ottawa Jewish Bulletin Publishing Co. Ltd., 21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, K2A 1R9.
Tel: (613) 798-4696. Fax: (613) 798-4730. Email: bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com. Published 19 times a year.
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PUBLISHER: The Ottawa Jewish Bulletin Publishing Co. Ltd. **EDITOR EMERITUS:** Barry Fishman **EDITOR:** Michael Regenstreil
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Brenda Van Vleet **BUSINESS MANAGER:** Rhoda Saslove-Miller **STAFF REPORTER:** Liana Shlien
ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Seymour Diener, chair; Anna Bilsky; Stephen Birdman; Mark Buckshon; Jack Cramer; Diane Koven; Louise Rachlis; Michael Wollock.

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Local subscription \$30.00. Out-of-town \$36.00. International \$50.00. \$2.00 per issue.
We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

ISSN: 1196-1929
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So who did the Israelis choose to lead?

Back in November, just after the Canadian election and just before the American, I wrote that those elections, plus the upcoming one in Israel, make this a fascinating time for those of us interested in politics.

Looking ahead to the Israeli election, I asked a couple of questions: "Will Israelis choose Kadima's Livni or Likud's Netanyahu?" and "Given Israel's proportional representation system, to whom will the next Israeli prime minister be beholden when it comes to putting together a governing coalition?"

Opinion polls leading up to the February 10 vote suggested Benjamin Netanyahu was headed to a substantial victory. But things changed as the campaign drew to a close. Ehud Barak's collapsing Labor Party bled support to Kadima and the extreme right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu, headed by Avigdor Lieberman, drew substantial support away from Netanyahu.

In the end, Livni squeaked ahead with 28 seats to Netanyahu's 27. But both claimed victory: Livni because she had the most seats of the 30-something parties who ran in the election and the dozen that garnered enough votes for representation in the Knesset, and Netanyahu because the right-wing and religious parties could come together in a majority coalition.

There are a number of possible scenarios



Editor

**Michael
Regenstreif**

for coalition building that will play out in the days and weeks – and possibly months – to come. Some of the likeliest possibilities are detailed in Leslie Susser's JTA report on Pages 1 and 2.

Of all the scenarios, Israel's best hope for stability would be a national unity coalition that would bring Kadima, Likud and Labor together – perhaps with the rotating-prime-ministership model that followed the 1984 election. I wouldn't expect either a Livni or Netanyahu coalition that's beholden to Lieberman's support to last more than a year or two, if that.

After our fall election, there were calls for proportional representation to be introduced here and, in that same November column, I expressed some reluctance to the idea based on what I've observed of Israeli politics over the years where the leading party has always had to look for support from single-issue or narrowly focused parties in the Knesset.

I think these latest Israeli election results will only reinforce that reluctance. The day after the election, I got an e-mail from an Israeli friend, Menachem Vinegrad, who lives in the Upper Galilee, commenting on the results.

"No clear winner has emerged," he wrote, "and the stronger parties must now bargain, barter and bribe in order to put together a ruling coalition. It's altogether a rotten system."

In the days after the election I read many editorials and columns in Israeli newspapers – from *Ha'aretz* to the *Jerusalem Post* – that pretty much agreed with my friend Menachem's assessment and spoke of the need for a massive overhaul of a system that just doesn't work very well.

The Batsheva Dance Company from Israel performed at the National Arts Centre (NAC) earlier this month.

A few days before the performance, someone forwarded a letter to me that was being circulated by Diana Ralph of Independent Jewish Voices encouraging a letter-writing campaign aimed at NAC management demanding cancellation of the event because Batsheva is "funded by Israel's government, its performers include none of Arab extraction, and it is 'proud to

be considered Israel's leading ambassador."

Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) also demands that the NAC commit to boycotting all "Israeli-funded artists and cultural exchanges."

I think back just a few decades to when the lives and livelihoods of many on the left were destroyed by McCarthy-era blacklists and boycotts. Now, it's some groups on the left and a labour leader, CUPE Ontario's Syd Ryan, who are engaged in McCarthyism.

In the Federation Report on Page 6, Linda Kerzner and Alana Kayfetz mention the daily challenges faced by students on campus who are engaged in Israel advocacy.

Disturbingly, there have been growing numbers of reports of anti-Israel incidents on Canadian campuses that have crossed the line into anti-Semitism, including several disconcerting reports of anti-Semitic violence at York University in Toronto and UBC in Vancouver.

While it is important that our universities remain venues for freedom of expression of all points-of-view, it is unacceptable that anyone be subjected to any form of hatred or violence

Obama visits Ottawa but skips the Beaver Tails

Greetings, and welcome to beautiful Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the second coldest capital city in the world – after Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Well, the third coldest really, ever since Kazakhstan moved its capital north a dozen years ago, from balmy Almaty to freezing Astana (you remember that big move, don't you?).

Of course, some put Ottawa all the way down at seventh on the chilly capital city list, after Ulaanbaatar, Astana, Moscow, Helsinki, Reykjavik, and Tallinn, Estonia.

But still, we're cold – really cold – top 10 cold.

So cold we're cool.

And we do have the world's longest skating rink.

Well, we *did* have the world's longest skating rink. Until last year, when Winnipeg's River Trail knocked the Rideau Canal out of the Guinness Book of World Records, thanks to a few hundred metres of extra shovelling.

But Winnipeg's skating trail, as long as it may be, is a scrawny, emaciated thing, the width of three or four skaters. Dozens of Ottawans can fit across the Rideau Canal; hundreds, in some sections.

So we still have the world's LARGEST skating rink.

Does that make you feel better?

And we remain the world headquarters for Beaver Tails; and maple baseball bats; and



Alan Echenberg

Canadian politicians.

If you want any of those things, you know where best to find 'em.

Right here in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Did I mention how cold it gets?

Years ago, I interviewed a number of ambassadors to Canada who had arrived from warmer corners of the globe. I asked them about their experiences serving in the second, or third, or seventh coldest capital city on earth.

Some of them struggled to maintain a diplomatic demeanour. The ambassador from Barbados seemed near tears when describing his first Ottawa winter.

New Zealand's High Commissioner to Canada was much more cheery. He explained his country was so small that he had to serve simultaneously as envoy not only to Ottawa, but also to the capitals of a number of Caribbean island nations.

As chance would have it, he always had to do his annual tour of Jamaica, Trinidad et al. in January, February and March.

He always made sure to brag about his winter travels to his fellow ambassadors back in Ottawa. Diplomacy can be a vicious business.

The New Zealand emissary didn't seem too fazed about leaving Ottawa in February and missing Wintertide.

Too bad for him, no? Because Wintertide is cool.

In fact, Wintertide can be added to the list of *Things Ottawa is the World Capital Of*: Beaver Tails, maple baseball bats, etc.

Let's see Barbados try to host an outdoor ice sculpture competition.

So, why am I bothering to go through this list? Why am I trying to hype the wintertime charms of my adopted hometown?

I'm doing so with one person in mind: U.S. President Barack H. Obama.

The new American president planned a trip to Ottawa this month. By the time you read this, he's expected to have already come and gone.

It was to be Obama's first trip outside the United States since his inauguration, restoring a longstanding tradition that was broken by George W. Bush, who visited Mexico first.

Bush eventually did show up in Ottawa for a full state visit, complete with a lavish dinner at the Museum of Civilization, a courtesy call to the Governor General, and hundreds of riot police holding back thousands

of protesters.

When Bill Clinton visited Ottawa as president in the winter of 1995, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton went for a skate on the canal and a taste of Beaver Tail.

But Obama did not plan any of those things, despite the fact his visit coincided with Wintertide.

No parliamentary address by Obama in Ottawa (he may be saving his first major address on foreign soil for the Muslim world). No meet-and-greet sessions with the public. Not even an overnight stay.

It's a bit of letdown for Obama's many Canadian fans. He's more popular here than any Canadian politician.

Also, perhaps, a blow to our civic pride in the *Capital of Cold*. Despite a Hawaiian background, Obama – who cut his political teeth in Chicago – is a cold-weather fan.

A few days after becoming president, he was already scolding the residents of Washington, D.C. for closing down local schools on account of a bit of snow.

No doubt Obama's aides will be perusing the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* to see how well his visit went over with the locals.

So ... Wintertide happens every year, Mr. President.

See you next February? And did you notice how delightfully cold it gets up here?

Alan Echenberg is TVOntario's Parliamentary bureau chief.

Bulletin Mailbag

Widening the Jewish circle

Mira Sucharov's column, *Intermarriage revisited, widening the Jewish circle* (January 26), was both timely and appreciated. One need not look very far to see the ways in which "inroads to Jewish welcoming are being made." The Ottawa Reconstructionist Havurah, a member of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation since 1988, has been welcoming persons who are not Jewish, and are partnered with Jewish members of our community, as full members for the past 22 years.

Our congregation strongly values the notion of community, equality and inclusivity and endeavours to welcome those who share these values while preserving the continuity of Jewish people and the integrity of Jewish practice.

Reconstructionist Judaism is a progressive, contemporary approach to Jewish life that integrates a deep respect for traditional Judaism with the insights and ideas of contemporary social, intellectual and spiritual life.

It was Mordechai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism, who first instituted the tradition of the Bat Mitzvah in 1922, making it possible for girls to formalize their entry into the adult Jewish community by reading from the Torah at services, and counting as part of a minyan.

We believe in bi-lineal descent, meaning children of one Jewish parent, of either gender, are considered Jewish if raised as Jews. The *half-Jewish* woman married to a *half-Jewish* man referred to in Sucharov's column should know that her daughter would be welcome to have her Bat Mitzvah within our community as long as she identifies herself as Jewish, does not practise another religion and has been a member of our community for two years.

Our inclusivity committee is currently studying the issue of intermarriage and we expect to soon have a policy reflecting our current thinking.

For more information on Reconstructionism and our community, please visit www.jrf.org and orh.ca.

Halina Siedlikowski and Deborah Margo
Ottawa Reconstructionist Havurah

Taking issue with Mira Sucharov's column on intermarriage

I am not some benighted rabbi who doesn't live in the 20th century, never mind the 21st. I can say that Ottawa is unique in my experience, for I don't know a single unenlightened rabbi here – and that includes rabbis among the fervently Orthodox, one of whom is a Canadian Forces chaplain. The profession of chaplaincy is not for the faint of heart. I am both a chaplain and a spiritual director and I teach both subjects.

A chaplain role is distinct from a rabbinic role imposed by a congregation with allied affiliation. A Conservative rabbi will announce Conservative positions. An Orthodox rabbi will announce Orthodox positions, and so on. Both know that their congregants will either follow those positions or not. A chaplain responds to personal need, not to institutional bias. The fervently Orthodox chaplain, for example, will encounter people of many faiths or none and respond to their need for solace and comfort. He does not do this from the institutional bias imposed by the Orthodox

Union or the International Conference of Chabad-Lubavitch Emissaries.

As a chaplain and spiritual director, I do not see it [intermarriage] as a tragedy *after the fact*. After the reality is established, my only role is to be helpful. In this regard, I am different from many rabbis, of whatever denomination.

I will move Heaven and Earth to discourage intermarriage. I have been involved with one intermarriage. The experience was enough to convince me that chaplaincy does not extend to the choice of marriage partner. My involvement was a mistake, and I absolutely insist that marriage occur between two Jewish partners. I have been approached many times by potential conversion students who have non-Jewish partners. I will not undertake instruction under those circumstances. How can a basis for Jewish identity occur in a marriage where only one spouse is Jewish, whether by choice or by birth?

There is no genetic determination of Judaism. The way one chooses to be seen by those who see us is an important aspect of traditional Judaism. A social scientist might call this an *ascriptive modality*, and non-traditional Judaism has generally dropped this form of identity. Judaism maintains a variety of prescriptive identity patterns, however, regardless of whether or not obvious signs of affiliation are present. The chuppah is one example.

The likelihood of Jewish continuity for the children born to a blended faith household does not depend on the chuppah, it depends on the synagogue. Sucharov's wish that synagogues open their membership to non-Jewish spouses will never happen in the mainstream. Ever. If the non-Jewish spouse wants membership, he or she should convert. No synagogue will then refuse membership. *Nu?* Where's the issue?

Synagogues are for those who identify as observant, irrespective of how observance manifests itself. Sucharov is not breaking new halachic ground with her assertion that one may be Jewish by identity. The Shulhan Arukh, which remains the primary arbiter of modern Jewish tradition, agrees with her assertion in certain instances. Marriage is not one of those instances, however.

You're either observant enough that Halacha means something to you, or you're not. That premise, in fact, forms the modern polemical premise of Reform Judaism, which is no less prescriptive than any other denomination even as it may be (though with decreasing severity) less halachic. I fail to understand the logic that synagogues should welcome with open arms someone who is not in the least bit interested in the prescriptive behaviours of Judaism.

And the children? The parent who joins a synagogue for a child's sake had better be prepared for a child who makes innocent enquiries, and possibly demands, about observance. The religious outreach movement fills its yeshivas with men and women who grew up with Jewish identity but without Jewish observance.

Rabbi Arie Chark

Editor's note: Several of Rabbi Chark's points need clarification.

Rabbi Chark says "there is no genetic determination of Judaism." It should be noted that, when Sucharov referred to a "genetic definition" of one's Jewishness, she was

referring to the traditional definition of being considered Jewish if one is born to a Jewish mother.

Rabbi Chark categorically states that "mainstream" synagogues will never open their membership to non-Jewish spouses. However, as Sucharov notes in her column this issue, Temple Israel does, indeed, welcome "families with a non-Jewish partner." And as mentioned in another letter, so too does the Ottawa Reconstructionist Havurah. This practice is common among Reform and Reconstructionist congregations. Both Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism are of the mainstream in modern-day North America.

What Rabbi Chark refers to as Sucharov's "assertion that one may be Jewish by identity," was the suggestion that children born of a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother be accepted as such.

SJCC needs a better sound system

The headline read "Ottawa community rallies in support of Israel" (January 26).

But we weren't there. For years, my husband, who is hard-of-hearing, has not been able to attend events at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC). We heard from some people at the rally that they could not hear the speakers. As the population ages, most males start losing their high-end hearing at 45.

The administration has been aware of this problem for a long time, but, until recently, has done nothing about it.

My husband and I invited the chief engineer of the National Arts Centre to advise the SJCC as to what they would need to install a proper sound system. He visited with them (*gratis*) months ago.

We have been informed by the SJCC administration that they have applied for a grant.

Are we waiting for Godot?

Louise and Harvey Glatt

Editor's note: Maxine Miska, SJCC interim president and COO, confirms that, indeed, the SJCC has applied for a grant to fund the purchase and installation of a much-improved sound system, one that will improve the ability of hearing-impaired persons to better enjoy events at the centre as soon as possible.

She also points out that the specific rally referred to in the letter was a Jewish Federation of Ottawa event that used a rented sound system.

It's Shaun Altshuler who's a Raider

I was just reading the *Bulletin* (February 9) and noticed an error in the *O-Zone* sports column. Playing on the Nepean Raiders Junior A team along with Andrew Calof is not Daniel Altshuler, but Shaun Altshuler. As well, there is not a 'c' in the name Altshuler. The Raiders acquired another Jewish player during the month of December from Boston. His name is Max Barron.

Daniel Altshuler is a goaltender for the Ottawa AAA Senators Major Bantam team.

Thank you, I always look forward to reading the *Bulletin*
Sheryl Blumenthal

Letters welcome

Letters to the Editor are welcome if they are brief, signed, timely and of interest to our readership. The *Bulletin* reserves the right to refuse, edit or condense letters.

The *Mailbag* column will be published as

space permits.

Send your letters to Michael Regenstreif, Ottawa Jewish Bulletin, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 1R9; or by e-mail to mregenstreif@ottawajewishbulletin.com.



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Brian Pearl
president

Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon a resounding success

By Jane and Martin Gordon, Co-Chairs
Ottawa Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon 2009

Thank you Ottawa! You made the 2009 Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon a resounding success by responding so generously when our volunteer callers reached you at home on February 8. Now that it's over, we would like to tell you some more about the project you're supporting.

When we visited Israel in the fall of 2008, we were privileged to visit Adamit Park with Kalil Adar, a forester employed by JNF-KKL.

Adamit Park is the site of the proposed memorial to Eldad Regev z"l and Ehud Goldwasser z"l. It is a beautiful site and we recommend that anyone visiting Israel include it on their list of places to see. The views are truly spectacular and it is a very appropriate location for the proposed memorial to the two soldiers as it is only five kilometres from where they were kidnapped. While we were there, we saw another memorial and can testify that JNF-KKL did a very tasteful job on that one. So we feel certain that they will do an equally wonderful one for the two soldiers.

Since the plight of the two soldiers touched the Ottawa Jewish community, JNF of Ottawa decided to focus its annual Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon on fundraising in honour and memory of Goldwasser z"l and Regev z"l. As a result of your generosity, trees will be planted in their memory and a memorial will also be constructed in their names.

As Brian Pearl noted in the February 9 *Bulletin*, the Telethon would not have happened without the support of the many individuals who gave of their time to ensure its success. Professional staff, including Mark Mendelson and his team in Montreal, and Susan Schwartzman of the Ottawa office, did a sterling job, as did the JNF Ottawa Board, chaired by Brian.

As well, 60 or so volunteers came out to help on the day of the Telethon to work the phones, keep track of the finances, etc. In addition, Patrons and Sponsors provided funds to defray the costs, and suppliers donated food and other goods. A special thank you to Steven Gordon and his team at Regional Group, Moishe's Grill in the Soloway JCC, Northern Management Services, Rideau Bakery, Nine to Five Coffee and Loblaw's College Square.

While the Telethon was about trees, JNF is about much more than trees. JNF is about environment and quality of life. It establishes reservoirs that preserve much needed water, rehabilitates watersheds, carries out extensive agricultural research, explores and preserves archaeological sites, and develops urban parks and playgrounds for children, including one that was built recently in Sderot.

By donating to JNF, whether by buying trees, supporting the Negev Dinner, remembering a loved one or a special anniversary, or by volunteering your time, you are truly making a difference in the lives of Israelis.

If you did not hear from one of our volunteers on February 8, and would like to donate to this year's Telethon, please contact Susan Schwartzman at the JNF Ottawa office at 613-798-2411.

On a daily basis you can plant trees for all occasions. An attractive card is sent to the recipient. To order, call the JNF office (613.798.2411).



Young Israel appoints new rabbi

By Alan Williams
President

Young Israel of Ottawa

Young Israel of Ottawa has welcomed Rabbi Ari Galandauer and his wife, Erin, to the Young Israel community as our new rabbi and rebbetzin.

Born in Montreal, Rabbi Galandauer grew up in the Chomedy and Cote St. Luc neighbourhoods and was involved in the active Jewish communities there.

"I will always be indebted to Beth Zion Congregation," said Rabbi Galandauer of the Cote St. Luc synagogue. "At Beth Zion, I learned to daven from the *amud*, *lain* the Torah and was afforded many opportunities to teach classes and deliver sermons."

Rabbi Galandauer attended Yeshiva Gedola Merkaz Hatorah and graduated from Hebrew Academy in Montreal. He continued his Jewish studies at Yeshivat Mikdash Melech in Jerusalem and returned to pursue rabbinic ordination at Kollel Horaah of Montreal as well as a post-graduate certificate in advanced rabbinics and synagogue management from the National Council of Young Israel and Touro College.

Rabbi Galandauer married



Rabbi Ari Galandauer, newly appointed spiritual leader of Young Israel of Ottawa.

Erin Gordon of Ottawa. After he graduated from rabbinical school and the first of their four children was born, the Galandauers returned to Israel where he entered the Ohr Lagola Rabbinic Training Program in Jerusalem.

As part of the program, trainees spend at least two years assisting and doing

outreach in small Jewish communities. This led the Galandauers to Salt Lake City, Utah, where Rabbi Galandauer served as rabbi at Sha'arei Tefilah, a community synagogue and outreach organization, for three years.

"Salt Lake City was a wonderful experience for my family and me," he re-

called. "And as much as the community appreciated and valued the presence of a young rabbi and his family, we personally gained 10-fold from the opportunity to serve in the community."

The rabbi and his family left Salt Lake City for Ottawa because there are no Jewish schools there.

"It was hard to say goodbye to the friends we made, relationships we built and community we led. We could not, however, put our children's Jewish education at risk," explained Rabbi Galandauer.

On moving to Ottawa, Rabbi Galandauer began teaching at Cheder Rambam.

He also served as a supply teacher for Hillel Academy and taught at Ottawa Talmud Torah Afternoon School and Yitzhak Rabin High School. He is currently teaching at Torah Academy in addition to his new duties as rabbi of Young Israel.

The Young Israel Synagogue is committed to maintaining high standards of Halacha while welcoming participation from all members of our community at services and a broad range of programs and classes for youth and adults.

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TRICA

Trip to Ukraine to showcase revival of Jewish community

By Atara Beck
Jewish Tribune

There is so much need in the Ukrainian Jewish community of approximately 100,000 souls, but what most moved Marra Messinger during a visit there last summer was the desperate situation of the elderly.

"These people lived through the Holocaust, through communism, and they deserve, at least, to live out their twilight years in dignity," said the Ottawa-based national executive director of the Canadian Friends of the Ukrainian Jewish Community (CFUJC).

Messinger witnessed the "wonderful work" being done by the welfare network established by the Jewish community of Kiev in 1995, including meals for impoverished seniors, a medical clinic, assistance to orphans and a plethora of religious, social and educational activities.

About 200 elderly Jews go to the Kiev synagogue daily because there's a soup kitchen in the basement, she said. "Otherwise, they wouldn't have a meal. There's a waiting list for hundreds more. So much more could be done with increased funding."

Winnipeg-born businessman Nathan Jacobson, who now resides in Toronto and Israel, founded CFUJC two years ago and is its chair. His contact, through business, with the Kiev Jewish community and subsequent concern about the extremely difficult situation there inspired his decision to create the non-profit organization.

"It is precisely because the Jews of the former Soviet Union are no longer the *in cause* of the North American Jewish communities that it is important to help out now," Jacobson stated. "Many seniors and children are suffering. We in Canada won the lottery. It is now up to us to help the ones who were left behind."

In an effort to raise awareness, he has spoken about the issue at synagogues in major Canadian cities.

The majority of Jews in Ukraine, about 80,000, live in Kiev. According to Messinger, many had been hiding their Jewish background, and "more and more are coming out and identifying as Jews every day."

Jacobson, whose family roots are in Pavolitch, Ukraine, discovered that the cemetery where his relatives were buried had been des-



Children and their teacher at the Mitzvah Kindergarten and Day School in Kiev, Ukraine.

ecrated, and he restored it.

Stephen Brodsky, another board member, is a great-grandnephew of the founders of the Brodsky synagogue, who were known as great philanthropists. It was built in the late 19th century, destroyed by the

Nazis during the Second World War and renovated in 2000.

CFUJC has organized a trip to Ukraine from April 19 to 26 with an option to visit Israel April 27 to May 5, during the week of Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut.

According to Messinger, the Ukrainian tour will provide an "insider's view" of both historical and contemporary Jewish Ukraine. The itinerary will include the magnificent Sophia Park as well as the infamous Babi Yar ravine, the mystical town of Uman, the grave of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov and several other significant sites of the once-thriving Yiddish culture and the beginnings of the Zionist movement.

Participants will learn not only about the Ukrainian Jewish community's great contributions of the past, but also about the revival of Jewish life now taking place there, including special projects that have been established and the people involved on both the giving and the receiving ends.

A car and guide can be arranged for anyone wishing to visit the birthplace of his or her relatives on the condition that the organizers are notified a month in advance.

To join this trip to the cradle of Western Jewish civilization or to make a donation, call Marra Messinger at 1-888-965-0003 or email mmessinger@cfujc.org.

For more information on the organization, visit cfujc.org.



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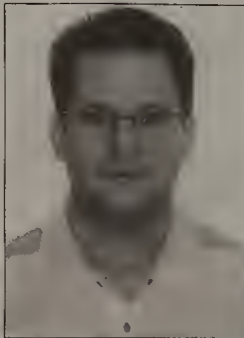
Soloway JCC to honour volunteers at AGM, Feb 25

By Pamela Rosenberg
for Soloway JCC

The Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC) has announced the recipients of two awards, who will be honoured at the Soloway JCC annual general meeting on February 25.

Steven Kerzner will receive the Ben Karp Soloway JCC Volunteer Service Award for his work on behalf of the Soloway JCC and Benji Finestone and Melanie Paquin will share the Grossman-Klein Teen Leadership Award for their dedication and service to the Jewish community and to the community-at-large.

Kerzner has volunteered in the Jewish community, and within his industry association, in a variety of capacities. He has been with Bakermat, his family's scrap metal recycling business, for more than 30 years serving, for the past eight years, on the board of direc-



Steven Kerzner



Benji Finestone



Melanie Paquin

tors of the Canadian Association of Recycling Industries.

In addition, Kerzner has been co-chair of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's Annual Campaign Top Donors division and chair of the Hillel Academy/Soloway JCC Desert Classic Golf Tournament

for five years.

Finestone is in his first year at McGill University. While a student at Sir Robert Borden High School, he was president of the Jewish Culture Club. He has been an active member of NCSY and attended Torah High for two

years. Finestone travelled to Poland and Israel in the summer of 2007 to learn about the Holocaust.

This summer, Finestone will be in Africa working with an international student volunteers program helping to develop and educate

underprivileged communities.

Paquin, a Grade 12 honour roll student at Glebe Collegiate Institute is a graduate of Temple Israel Religious School. Her extensive list of achievements includes representing Canada at Children's International Summer Village in Brazil and at Children's International Summer Camp in Italy.

Paquin is currently working with special education students, leading activities and helping with the planning of holiday events at Temple Israel Religious School.

The Soloway Jewish Community Centre annual general meeting will take place Wednesday, February 25, 7:00 pm, in the Joseph and Rose Ages Family Building at 21 Nadolny Sachs Private.

Contact Gustavo Rymberg at 613-798-9818 ext. 271 or grymberg@jccottawa.com for more information.

Federation program: Guess who's coming to dinner?

By Benita Siemiatycki
Jewish Ottawa InfoCentre

No, it's not Sidney Poitier. But it could be you or someone you know.

In an effort to reach and welcome Jewish newcomers to Ottawa, as well as people who may be long-time residents but have had a limited affiliation with Judaism, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa has started a Shabbat and Holiday Dinner Program.

Some Ottawa-area families have offered to invite individuals into their homes for a *haimeshe* meal and an opportunity to forge connections with the Jewish community.

If you are relatively new to Ottawa, or know someone who has recently arrived,

please contact us. Or if you know someone who was unaffiliated and is now seeking to establish ties with the community, please encourage them to call. There are families who would love to have these individuals and families over for a meaningful Shabbat dinner, or to celebrate a holiday.

We will try to match up the hosts and guests by the ages of children, if any, location and other requests as needed. We are still looking for host families, and for people who can invite Jewish college and university students to their homes for Passover seders. This year, the seders coincide with exam schedules, so many students from out of town will not be celebrating with their own families.

The Federation also has a Welcome Kit filled with useful information for recent arrivals in Ottawa.

If you would like to meet other members

of the Jewish community over dinner, or can refer someone else, or if you'd like a Welcome Kit, contact me at 613-798-4644 or infocentre@jewishottawa.com.



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"I wanted to learn some basic Hebrew before going on a family trip to Israel. The Jewish Ottawa InfoCentre told me where to get information on courses."



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Cathy Maron Your support during my mother's illness, passing and shiva is appreciated more than I can ever express. I am lucky to have such a wonderful friend by Ida Firestone

Sharon Weinstein The support you gave me during the time surrounding my mother's illness, passing and shiva is appreciated more than I can ever express. You are a wonderful friend by Ida Firestone

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Maureen and Henry Molot Mazal tov on the birth of your twin granddaughters by Anne Edelson

Chris Sands Our warmest congratulations on your engagement to Victoria. We wish you many decades of happiness together by Maureen and Henry Molot

Mendy Taller Mazal tov on the engagement of Jason to Nina by Maureen and Henry Molot

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Sydney Klotz Wishing you continued good health with love by Evelyn Greenberg and family

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Sam and Dora Litwack Family Fund

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Schachter-Ingber Family Fund

R'fuah Shlema:

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R'fuah Shlema:

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Beloved Aunt of Ted Jacobsen by Judith and Harvey Slipacoff

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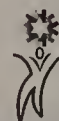
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Sea-to-sea hike raises \$100,000 for victims of terror

One Family Fund Canada supports the work in Israel of One Family, an organization that provides victims of terrorism and their families with direct medical, financial and legal assistance, and with emotional and psychological aid.

Between November 2 and 6, 41 Canadians participated in One Family Fund Canada's first Sea-to-Sea Hike and walked from the Mediterranean Sea to Lake Kinneret, the Sea of Galilee. Ottawa participants included Lynda Nadolny, Paul Lyons, Aubrey Goldstein, Caroline Vanneste, and Brian and Susan Gold.

Shari Silverstein describes her experience and reaction to the hike: "It will take some time for the 41 participants of the One Family Fund's Sea-

to-Sea hike to return to our everyday lives. Each of us has come back changed in some way. The experience was simultaneously exhilarating, emotional, meaningful, bonding, memorable and quite emotionally draining.

"We are a proud group. We raised close to \$100,000 for Israel's victims of terror, several of whom participated in our daily hikes sharing their heart-wrenching stories with us during picnic lunches in spectacular settings, and following our evening meals.

"We have returned with a deeper connection with Eretz Israel, having spent five intimate days hiking along the country's trails, and are more connected to the people who face each day with the realities of living in a country



Participants in One Family Fund Canada's first annual hike gather on the Mediterranean shore below Rosh Hanikrah.

which can never let down its guard.

"We filled our bottles in the Mediterranean Sea on Day 1 and emptied them in

the Sea of Galilee on Day 5.

In between, we became more bumbled, appreciative, understanding and fulfilled individuals."

The Second Annual One Family Fund Sea-to-Sea Hike will take place October 25 to 29, 2009.

For information about One

Family Fund, or the hike, contact One Family Fund Canada at 416-644-4955 or hike@onefamilyfund.co or visit onefamilyfund.co.

OTC to celebrate Purim in the jungle

By Ferris Hamilton
for Ottawa Torah Center Chabad

Ottawa Torah Center (OTC) will be hosting its annual *Purim-around-the-world* party on Monday, March 9, 6:30 pm, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. This year's stop is the jungle.

"Our philosophy is to create innovative holiday programs that invite people of all backgrounds to come celebrate, which leaves an impact on the participants, and which makes Yiddishkeit fun and exciting," says Rabbi Menachem Blum of OTC. "We have been hosting these Purim parties for over 10 years now and, with every year, they're getting more and more popular."

The non-stop fun program will include a delicious kosher grill menu and salad bar. In the spirit of the jungle, participants will have the opportunity to come face to face and interact with giant snakes, alligators and lizards as well as drum in a drumming circle or play other jungle instruments. The program will include the traditional Megillah reading along with a simultaneous slide show. In the spirit of Purim, participants are invited to

masquerade in their best jungle attire or any other costume.

A special feature of the evening will be the amazing Jamey Tumer from Virginia, who will play music with 60 wine glasses. Jamey creates, and performs on, unique musical instruments using scientific principles related to sound. He is one of only a few musicians in the world who play the glass harp, an instrument with a clear, pure sound that brings forth wonder in everyone who hears it.

Tumer's glass harp has 60 stemmed-glasses, which he tunes by filling them with water to various levels. He plays them by dipping his fingers into bowls of water and going around the rims, up to six glasses at a time, producing both melody and harmony, just like a keyboard.

Purim in the Jungle gets underway at 6:30 pm on March 9. The Megillah reading is at 7:30. Admission is \$18 adult, \$10 child and \$180 sponsorship.

For reservations or information, please call Rabbi Blum at 313-823-0866 or visit ottawatorahcenter.com.



Jamey Tumer fascinates kids of all ages with the sound of his glass harp. He'll perform March 9 at OTC's Purim in the Jungle event.

Na'amat's Aviva Chapter selling kosher-for-Passover wines

By Deana Schildkraut
Aviva Chapter
Na'amat Canada

Aviva Chapter of Na'amat Canada is ready to help you prepare for Passover with our annual Kosher-for-Passover wine sale. This year, we have a large selection of wines and liqueurs from a variety of

countries including Israel, Australia, Chile and others.

Funds raised by the wine sale help support Na'amat's vast network of social and educational services in Israel. Especially now, because of terrorism and the international economic situation, the number of Israelis experi-

encing hardship is increasing and many are turning to Na'amat for help.

Services funded by Na'amat in Israel include day care centres, high schools, single parent support services, legal aid centres and a facility for abused women.

Here in Ottawa, Na'a-

mat's *School Supply for Kids* program supplies packages of school supplies each September to children living with their mothers in shelters for battered women.

If you are interested in being on our mailing list or purchasing wine, call me at 613-726-9595.

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*List of names based on donations received by February 1st, 2009.

We apologize for any omissions or errors.



Cuban Jewish community 'a diamond in the rough'

By Lindsay Rothenberg
Development Associate –
Women's Division & YAD
Jewish Federation of Ottawa

Twenty young professionals from Canadian Jewish communities embarked on a five-day journey January 20 to meet with Cuba's Jewish community. We couldn't even begin to imagine the lessons we were about to learn. This community – which has so much less than we do in Canada – truly understands the meaning of the word *community*.

The first thing we noticed on arriving in Havana – where the majority of Cuba's 1,500 Jews live – is the dilapidated buildings. In spite of broken windows, crumbling cement and buildings in dire need of paint, it is easy to see this city was once magnificent. It was difficult to imagine that the Jewish people we were about to meet live in conditions that aren't even close to being acceptable by North American standards.

How can we help them? How can we get them the money they need? What kind of projects can we fund? These were some of the first thoughts that occurred to me.

After spending just five days with this community, it was evident that it's our company, not our money, they want. They want to welcome us into their vibrant community, immerse us in their culture, and share with us what little they have.

Our first stop was at the *Patronato*. Built in 1953, it is the home of the *Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba* – the Cuban Jewish community centre – and Beth Shalom Temple, a Conservative synagogue.

Adela Dworin, vice-president of the Casa, ushered us into the library and told us about her community. In its glory days, the Cuban Jewish community consisted of nearly 15,000 people. With many shuls, schools, a cemetery and community centre, Jewish life flourished. Things changed drastically after the revolution brought Fidel Castro to power in 1959; nearly 90 per cent Cuba's Jewish population fled the country.

For more than 30 years, Cubans were not permitted to practise religion and still maintain their good standing with the Communist Party. Dworin told us that, during this time, the community considered "seven men and three Torahs" to be a *Cuban minyan* when small numbers gathered to practise Judaism.

However, since 1992, Cubans



Deborah Soriano reading from the Torah at Beth Shalom Temple in Havana. (Photo: Tatiana Santos Méndez, courtesy of jewishcuba.org)

have been allowed to be religiously involved and still maintain their standing in the Communist Party. It was this change of policy that led to the revitalization of the Jewish community under the leadership of the late José Miller, with assistance from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

The Jews of Havana returned to the Patronato – the once-vibrant hub of the community – breathing new life into it. Women's groups now meet, children's classes take place, Shabbat dinners are held and Jewish holidays are celebrated.

On a tour of the Patronato, we saw the sanctuary, offices, classrooms, a computer lab and a social hall used for everything from holiday meals to serving as space for a troupe of young adults who practise Israeli dancing.

The building also has a very special room: a pharmacy. While health care is free, finding medications and other pharmaceutical products is difficult in Cuba. But, thanks to visitors from Canada and overseas, the shelves of the Patronato pharmacy are well stocked. A volunteer pharmacist fills doctors' prescriptions and medication is provided free. The pharmacy is open to all Cubans, not just the Jew-

ish community.

Walking through Old Havana, we came across the Orthodox shul, Adath Israel, and Cuba's only kosher butcher shop. Passing a government pharmacy, we were shocked at the bare shelves. It was evident that the medication donations we brought will go a long way.

We were accompanied by several young Cuban Jews, who answered our questions about life there. It seemed like the more questions we asked, the more questions we had.

One of the unique aspects of this community is that it is being brought back to life by people under 40. They want to build their community and see it thrive. Their parents, who grew up unable to practise Judaism, are, for the most part, uninvolved. As one of the young adults told us, they were born Cuban, but, after 1992, they could choose to be Jewish.

One afternoon, we helped deliver 20 bags of the supplies we had brought with us to Cuba. We were joined by Wilbur, 35, who runs *Kesher*, a home-visiting program for shut-ins.

Our first stop was at Shirley's. She'd had breast cancer surgery less

than a week before and takes care of her mentally disabled adult sister. Shirley greeted us with the warmest smile, hugs and kisses and proudly gave us a tour of her apartment: a small living room, a single shared bedroom, small kitchen, bathroom and storage closet. The apartment had no windows, only shutters. I wondered what happens when a hurricane strikes.

Beaming with pride, Shirley repeatedly welcomed us, saying her house is our house. After a few minutes of translated conversation, we were off to more visits.

We visited a mother and her severely handicapped daughter, and an elderly couple with no children who have been married for 62 years. At each home, we were greeted as if we were old friends. Not one person looked at the bags we came with. They didn't care what we brought. They cared that we came.

Shabbat in Havana was truly a wonderful experience. We arrived at Beth Shalom a little early and watched as the people came in. The service was conducted in Spanish and Hebrew, and was led by Cantor Fernando Lapiduz – a JDC *shaliach* from Argentina – and two female *chazans*. Together we sang and prayed as we ushered in Shabbat. Towards the end of the service, the synagogue doors opened and we heard murmurings about waiting for the *niños* (children). All of a sudden, a group of children appeared and led the congregation in *Adon Olam*.

Their teacher explained that every Shabbat they learn a new song, and this week they wanted to

sing it with us. Together we sang *Shir LaShalom*, the peace song sung by Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's prime minister, just before he was assassinated in 1995.

We joined the community for Shabbat dinner, which was served by the youth of the community.

Havdalah found us back at the Patronato for a short service and a performance of Israeli folkdances by the Cuban troupe. When the dancers took a break, David, a young man from Cuba, performed. This talented guitarist played his intro and then stepped up to the microphone and began slowly singing *Am Israel Chai*.

Several seconds later, the entire Patronato was filled with dancing and singing as we all belted out the song. It didn't matter that some of us spoke Spanish and others English. Together, in Hebrew, the message was clear: the people of Israel live.

The Cuban Jewish community is like a diamond in the rough. They reminded us that a strong community does not need material objects, extravagant affairs or fancy awards. It needs a few leaders, who are willing to learn, make mistakes and stick with the community through the good times and bad. Age is just a number. More important are the desire, motivation and enthusiasm to create a Jewish community where one wants to see their children grow up.

As we prepared to leave, hugging our new Cuban friends, they told us we'd see each other again. They were positive this would not be our last trip there.

I'm sure it won't.



Adela Dworin (left) and the late José Miller, leaders of Havana's Jewish community. (Photo courtesy of jewishcuba.org)

Making outreach relevant by addressing concerns

Much is made these days about Jewish communal affiliation and many Jewish groups are investing considerable resources toward outreach. In Ottawa alone, the Ottawa Jewish Federation's Shalom Baby project aims to bring the youngest members of the community together, JET (Jewish Education through Torah) endeavours to bring halachic teaching to adults, while the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC) has struck a task force to further the JCC's outreach mission.

Issues surrounding affiliation, spirituality and continuity are important and deserve their own columns. For now, though, I'm wondering about the relationship between organizational values and outreach. Should Jewish organizations convince the unaffiliated of the goodness of their missions, or should they adapt their missions to the ethical, moral and even aesthetic sensibilities of those they are trying to reach?

In other words, are organizations who claim outreach as a goal trying to "create a more open and welcoming Judaism" as encouraged by the New York-based Jewish Outreach Institute?

A recent issue of the now-defunct *Jewish Living* magazine tapped into this sentiment when they ran a story asking "How gay is your shul?" (The LGBT Welcoming Synagogues Project was surveying almost all American congregations on their policies of inclusion.) Most of those who do not fit the traditional family mould, it seems, are clearly more attracted to liberal congregations in the Reform, Reconstructionist and Renewal movements, as well as some Conservative congregations that are more inclusive than others.

Though tradition and historical family affiliation can be strong pulls for many, *straight* Jews who view a given congregation's openness to gays and lesbians as a litmus test for the congregation's values, or who value gender equality, might choose their synagogue according to those criteria as well.

On its website, Ottawa's Temple Israel asks prospective congregants, "Are you looking for a synagogue that will nourish your Jewish roots while respecting your commitment to contemporary values?" and then lets them know Temple Israel is "an egalitarian, inclusive synagogue that welcomes non-traditional families, Jews by Choice, and families with a non-Jewish partner."

Synagogue worship is an obvious area where an individual's values can be clearly measured against those of the movement's edicts – although most congregations engage in some degree of debate over social direction from time to time.

Where it's less obvious is in other types of Jewish institutions. Should JCCs stop using Styrofoam to appeal to the environmentally conscious? Should Jewish learning institutes alter their common practice of gender-separate Talmud study to address concerns over *separate but equal* status among those who strive to break down gender barriers? How should Jewish day schools teach the book of Leviticus to children of same-sex parents?

When I was growing up in 1980s Winnipeg, it seemed that every Jewish kid in the city congregated on Saturday afternoons at the YMHA for a frenzied, parentless afternoon of social clubs, gym, swimming, magic and puppetry classes, board games, French fries and Astropops; almost the same weekly regimen that my father participated in a quarter-century earlier at the same Hargrave Street location, except that Jiffy Bars was his preferred snack.

These days, parents are faced with a huge array of choices for their children's weekend recreation, with organized sports and other activities, not to mention supplementary



Values, Ethics, Community

Mira Sucharov

Jewish education for those opting out of day schools – making Jewish agencies compete for participants in a way they did not always have to. And with so many recreational, intellectual and spiritual options for adults looking to express their identity, Jewish organizations have to work hard to attract adherents.

I think it comes down to the question of relevance. Though many Jews might readily admit to harbouring a strong Jewish identity, their personal preferences might not always jibe with organized Jewish life. Potential members might ask themselves, why would I invest in institutions that don't reflect my worldview?

Of course, there may be others for whom many Jewish organizations are too progressive – though it's probably fair to say that in most cases, those Jews would already be affiliated, the pull of tradition for them being paramount.

While personal values and ethics vary, Jewish communal institutions must find a way to tap into existing social, ecological, intellectual and spiritual concerns. What precisely these concerns are, though, is not obvious within Jewish communities whose members' identities are necessarily shaped by various familial, local, regional and global forces.

Maybe a good first-cut solution is to ask what people really care about these days – rather than assuming that what has sometimes been called *Jewish values* are really the values of all contemporary Jews. It's not an easy question – but one that promises to help organizations reach out more meaningfully.

Mira Sucharov, an associate professor of political science at Carleton University, is a Soloway JCC board member and sits on their outreach task force referred to in this column.

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- A woman who lives in the Byward Market area needs transportation in order to participate in two monthly community programs: the 1st Thursday of the month at Beth Shalom synagogue and the 4th Wednesday of the month at Agudath Israel.
- A blind woman who lives in Alta Vista needs transportation in order to participate in a luncheon program at Agudath Israel on the 4th Wednesday of every month.
- A woman who lives at Rideau & Friel would like to participate in a JFS program on Carling Ave., the last Thursday of every month, from 10:00 to 11:30 am. She needs drives to and from the program.

OTHER

- A disabled woman who lives downtown needs help with paperwork for an hour or two a couple of times a month from now until the end of tax season.

To take on one of these important and meaningful opportunities, please contact Lisa Bogdonov, Volunteer Coordinator of the *Thelma Steinman Seniors Support Services* unit 613-722-2225, ext. 327 or Lbogdonov@jfsottawa.com.

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- Special mitzvah anyone? Bring a resident to Shabbos services (Saturdays at 9:15 am) and enjoy the fantastic Oneg with friends. Great cholent!
- Newly retired? Put Hillel Lodge volunteering in your plan. Residents welcome visitors, program assistance, all kinds of options. Pick a day, a time of day, a type of event – whatever suits your schedule. Try it out now.
- Free on Fridays? Oneg Shabbat every week at 10:30 am and bingo at 2:00 pm – come join us.
- Culture maven? Accompany our residents to museums, concerts and plays (Wednesday and Thursday afternoons).
- Tuesday special: Enjoy our special events every week at 2:15 pm.
- Shopping experts? Have fun while accompanying residents to shopping at a mall (Monday mornings).

To inquire further, please call 613-728-3900 ext. 121 or email marilyn@hillel-ltc.com

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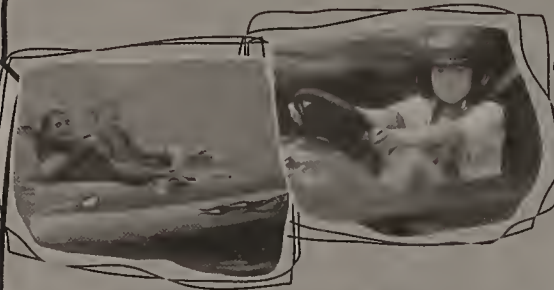
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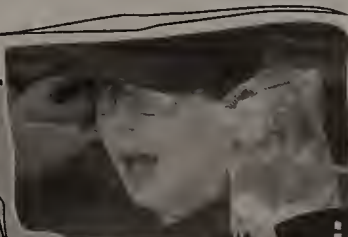
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Chicken and Broccoli with Spicy Peanut Sauce

Serves 4

This recipe is from Linda Stephen's *Complete Book of Thai Cooking* and can easily be made vegetarian by substituting diced extra-firm tofu for the chicken.

- 1 head broccoli, cut into florets,
with stems peeled and sliced diagonally
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 3 shallots, peeled
- 1 stalk lemongrass, white part only,
cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup roasted peanuts
- 1-2 teaspoons coarsely chopped fresh red chilies
(if desired, remove seeds for less heat)
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce or soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons white sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken thighs,
cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons freshly chopped cilantro

Blanch broccoli in boiling water for 3 minutes. Cool under cold water and drain. Set aside.

In food processor, finely chop garlic, shallots, lemongrass and peanuts. Add chilies, fish or soy sauce, sugar and pepper and process until fine.

Heat a large skillet over high heat and add oil. Add chicken and stir-fry for 3 minutes. Remove chicken with a slotted spoon. Reduce heat to medium.

Add peanut sauce and cook, stirring for 1 minute. Add coconut milk and simmer for 3 minutes.

Add chicken to pan and turn to coat with sauce. Simmer for 4-5 minutes until chicken is cooked through. Add broccoli and stir, just until heated through. Garnish with fresh cilantro. Serve.



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Thai: balance of sweet, sour, salty, hot Made with Love



Cindy Feingold

The first recipe is for Chicken and Broccoli with Spicy Peanut Sauce. The next two, Spicy Thai Chicken and Jasmine Rice, I came across while surfing the 'Net looking for more Thai inspiration.

Don't let the word *spicy* in these recipe titles frighten you off, if you are not a lover of heat. The amount of chili can be decreased to your comfort level.



Lemongrass and red finger chili

Spicy Thai Chicken

Serves 4

This recipe comes from marthastewart.com. It is a fantastic way to use lean ground chicken.

- 2 tablespoons uncooked jasmine rice
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1/2-1 finely chopped red finger chili, seeds removed
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce or soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon palm sugar or light brown sugar
- 1 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves
- 1 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves, torn if large
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 head Boston lettuce, leaves washed,
dried and left whole for serving
- 1/2 English cucumber, cut into julienne strips
- 3 large carrots cut into julienne strips

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add rice and toast, tossing until golden brown. Transfer rice to a small bowl and let cool. Transfer rice to a spice or coffee grinder. Grind until coarsely ground. Set aside.

In a large skillet, heat vegetable oil over medium heat. Add ground chicken and cook, stirring to break up large pieces, until chicken is cooked through, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in chili. In a small bowl, whisk together lime juice, sugar, and fish or soy sauce until sugar has dissolved; add to chicken mixture. Continue cooking for 1 minute more.

Remove from heat and stir in ground rice. Garnish with cilantro, mint and red onion. Serve chicken in lettuce leaves with cucumber and carrots.

Jasmine Rice

This recipe is from marthastewart.com.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 1-inch piece lemongrass, white part only,
very finely chopped
- 1 shallot, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 cup uncooked jasmine rice
- 1 cup water
- 1 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 green onions, green part only,
thinly sliced on diagonal for garnish

In a small saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add lemongrass, shallot, and garlic. Cook and stir until fragrant and translucent, about 1 minute.

Add rice and mix to coat with oil. Cook until slightly toasted, about 1 minute. Add water, stock and salt. Stir to combine. Cover and cook until liquid is absorbed and rice is cooked through, about 15 minutes.

Remove from heat and let stand, covered, 5 to 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork and garnish with scallions. Serve immediately.

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In memory of:
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Elaine Pressman's mother by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Continued on page 24

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Not your typical picture books

In choosing to review the following books, I've presented myself with a rare but interesting task. How to review and/or describe picture books for young children that seem to be self-explanatory? Indeed, if they are so self-explanatory, why review them at all?

As to the *why* question, I like the unique idea on which each book is based. For the *how* question, simplicity will be my guide. I'll have to be up front about my own limitations in approaching these books, yet clear about their appeal.

Alef-Bet Yoga for Kids
By Ruth Goldeen
Photos by Bill Goldeen
Kar-Ben Publishing 2009
24 pages. Ages 3-8.

In this day of exercise, exercise, exercise, I know it's shocking to admit that I know virtually nothing about yoga. I tried it, twice. I enjoyed it, sort of. And that's that.

What I do bring to my perspective on *Alef-Bet Yoga for Kids* is the knowledge that successful learning is a multi-dimensional task for everyone, not just for children. The more parts of our brain used to learn a specific task, the more likely we are to learn it easily, learn it completely, and, here's the kicker, remember it. Muscle memory and intellect are every bit as important as visual and auditory memory and intellect.

When I add that knowledge to the known benefits of encouraging children of all ages to be physically active, I can only applaud *Alef-Bet Yoga for Kids* for its intent, encouragement and instruction. Its poses make good use of the flexibility and delight in using one's body that young children naturally possess. Adding the teaching the Alef-Bet – the Hebrew alphabet – make for a win-win combination in this book.

Alef-Bet Yoga for Kids features pictures of boys and girls



Kid Lit

Deanna Silverman

holding yoga or modified yoga poses against the backdrop of each letter of the Alef-Bet. In essence, the children are, as Ruth Goldeen states in her introduction, experientially "being" the letters of the alphabet. The letters are named in transliteration and shown in Hebrew.

Occasionally, I found the matching of a pose with a letter a bit of a stretch (pun intended), but that's OK. After all, the kids are enjoying the health benefits of each pose. For parents and teachers knowledgeable about yoga, *Alef-Bet Yoga for Kids* includes a glossary of the poses that describes each one in detail.

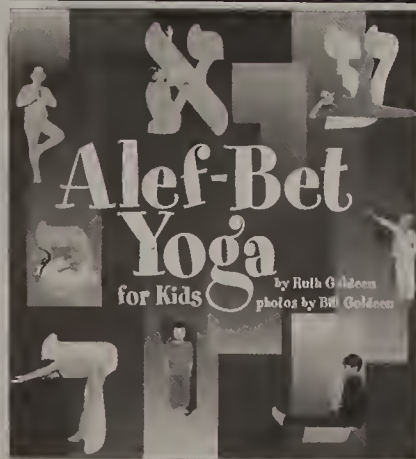
A word of caution: I don't believe in the *no pain, no gain* approach to exercise. If a child complains that a particular pose hurts, modify it so it doesn't hurt. I'm sure neither Ruth or Bill Goldeen would want to associate learning the Alef-Bet with pain. Nor would I.

Happy stretching. Happy learning. Happy kids.

My First Yiddish Word Book
Edited by Joni Sussman
Illustrated by Pepi Marzel
Kar-Ben Publishing 2009
32 pages. Ages 3-8.

It's been a long time since I've reviewed what, in effect, a pictorial dictionary. It's also been a long time since I've used my limited knowledge of Yiddish. Doing both at once required a fair amount of effort. But it was worthwhile given the major attempts to revive Yiddish as both a spoken language and the language of an extensive Ashkenazi cultural heritage.

My First Yiddish Word Book contains 200 Yiddish words, divided into 17 categories. They are presented as folksy pictures with the words printed in Yiddish, transliteration and English translation at the bottom of each page. The categories range from parts of the body, to family, clothes, home, school, play-



By Ruth Goldeen; photos by Bill Goldeen

ground, birthday party, the zoo, seasons, colours and a few other topics familiar to young children. Being modern, a television set and computer are included (but no cell phone).

My one complaint about *My First Yiddish Word Book* is the fact that its Pronunciation Guide is inadequate. It lacks examples and makes no mention of the differences in Yiddish pronunciation depending on where a speaker or her family originated in the Old Country. For example, the transliteration of the word for "bird" is presented as "feygel, whereas in my family it was "faygel." Nevertheless, *My First Yiddish Picture Book* is an inspired welcome addition to Jewish kid lit.

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Few laughs in Klug's attempt at cool Jewish humour

Cool Jew: The Ultimate Guide for Every Member of the Tribe

By Lisa Alcaley Klug

Andrews McMeel Publishing 2008

Paperback

238 pages

I wanted to like this book. I like the cover: a faux representation of a dark, leather *siddur* cover, but with the book's name in gold, rhinestone-studded letters affixed to a gold chain. I like to laugh. I like, and even feel a certain ethnic pride in, the legacy of Jewish humour. I want to support women humourists, who are all too rare. But, alas, I did not like this book.

Cool Jew is a catalogue of Jewish cultural tidbits presented in light parody peppered with sketches and some photographs. Apparently, it's intended to appeal to the 20- and 30-something set. Author Lisa Alcaley Klug, who describes herself as the daughter of a "Panamanian/Israeli/Ladino-loving mother" and a "German/Polish/Yiddish father," sets out to show readers how to become a "Heebster."

According to Klug, "a Heebster is someone who loves being Jewish, who is not afraid to be a total dork, but who also has that certain Jewish *sovaiv foire* that makes him or her hipper than hip."

Klug employs wordplay, some of it mildly charming: "Being Jewish is about much more than bagels and *lox*. It's about moxie, about feeling *Yiddishe* foxy! Because when

Book Review

Mira Sucharov

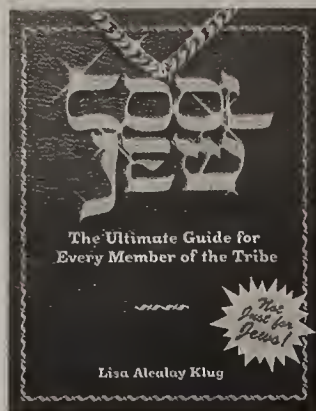
you're of *Da Tribe*, you've got *Da Vibe*."

There is also some potentially useful information, such as where to shop for Jewish gear – mostly T-shirts emblazoned with slogans such as *Sephordilicious*, *Hebrew School Drop Out* or *Manischewitz Kosher*; a colour-by-numbers-looking sketch depicting dozens of Jewish ritual items; a list of Jewish foods, some less well-known; and an appendix listing Jewish books, groups and websites.

Her list of Hebrew slang is useful, though her instruction to "emphasize the second syllable to sound like a local (or as if you've slept with one)" is bad advice for about a third of the words. I'm thinking of words like *ochlo*, *basso*, and *yolla* (unless local Israelis prefer to sleep with a tourist who sounds like one).

There are many, many references to Manischewitz wine; bow to get through a bris, a wedding and a shiva; how to know when you're addicted to Manischewitz; what to do with a leftover Manischewitz bottle.

The book also attempts to capitalize on earlier (and much funnier) Jewish humour,



such as a page titled *Jewish vs. Goyish*, a *Tribute to Lenny Bruce*. Cribbing directly from Bruce's famous routine, Klug attempts her own list comparing foods that are either "Jewish" (mustard, matzah balls, blintzes, Manischewitz – again), or "Goyish" (mayo, Hostess Sno Balls, crepes, Almaden Burgundy in a box). Yet, this still left me puzzled as to why we need a new version of Lenny Bruce's original.

Her chart, *Headwear Decoder: What the Lid Says About the Yid*, also had me scratching my head. She lists "Mickey Maus Ears" as being associated with the "spiritual conviction" described as "Art

Spiegelman's my hero." Surely, she could not simply have been referring to Spiegelman's use of mice to depict Jews in his powerful, critically acclaimed graphic novel, *Maus*? I kept looking for the joke: Disney reflecting a subversion of contemporary New York intellectuals? Northeast/California culture clash? In the end, no joke worth laughing about seemed to be there.

Reading this book, I kept thinking about what makes humour funny. It seems to come down to at least one of two rules: either state the obvious, which no one has bothered to articulate (think the genius of Jerry Seinfeld), or create absurd associations such that one can't help but laugh. None of that happens here.

I also couldn't help recalling much funnier Jewish books: recent ones like *Yiddish with Dick and Jane* – to which Klug actually devotes a page of her book – and *Hoikus for Jews*; as well as my favourite book of Jewish humour from my childhood, Allan Gould and Danny Siegel's *The Unorthodox Book of Jewish Records and Lists*, which I spent hours memorizing during the summer of 1982.

I didn't get a chance to test *Cool Jew* on some younger friends. Perhaps a pre-teen, for whom one's identity is just starting to crystallize, and almost any well-meaning joke about one's ethnic group inevitably sounds cool and funny, would be a better audience.

Hang on: you'll get the hang of hanging

I recently received a fairly long e-mail missive explaining the many meanings of the word *up* in English and why it is so hard for non-English speakers to get the hang of it. This, of course, brought me into another sphere entirely, namely what is with the word *hang*?

If you get the *hang of something*, it could mean that you

understand it. Of course, even if you did not get the hang, but just got it, that might even be better. Getting the *hang of something* might also mean improving one's performance in that thing.

I tried to use the expression to *get the hang of*. At first it was difficult, but, after a few tries and a lot of practice, I am actually getting the hang of it. I am either getting better at the hanging of it or perceiving the exact way it hangs.

And when my teenaged son used to ask me how it was *hanging*, I am not sure that it was the same *it* that I was trying to get the hang of. It's all very ambiguous and imprecise. And yet everyone seems to understand and to carry on as if all was normal.

But then he would ask me who I was *hanging with*. As far as I could tell I was not *hanging with* anyone. I was sitting down alone in my room and he was at the door looking at me. Besides, *hanging with* someone, as everyone knows, is better than *hanging alone*. People have to *hang together*, apparently, although on which wire or which rope is unspecified.

It was only later that I understood that *hanging*, in his terms, meant the same as *hanging out* when I was younger. I did not *hang with*. I *hung out with*, which is twice as complicated because it has two prepositions instead of one.

If you were bored and you wanted to *hang out*, you went to your favourite hangout and *hung out*. That's all there was to it. Somehow, though, this *hanging out*, had nothing to do with hanging out the wash, which one did on a line in the backyard. There were no dryers in those days.

And, although you could hang out your wash in public, you did not want to wash your dirty laundry in the same



Humour me, please

Rubin Friedman

place. And, if you found yourself out on a limb with an important project that was not succeeding, you yourself might be hung out to dry.

Now, while you were *hanging out* impatiently in your hangout, looking for people to *hang out with*, the owner might tell you to *hang on*. And, if he thought you were being rude and pushy, he would tell you "Hang on!" with an exclamation point to let you know you had to wait your turn. If he was from Texas, he might even tell you to "hang on to what you got" or, from somewhere else, he might tell you to "hang on to your hat."

And, if I was getting desperate, I would *hang on by the skin of my teeth*, which, to me, did not provide much comfort because, as far as I could tell, my teeth had no skin.

Nowadays, we don't tell people to *hang on* by anything, but we urge them to *hang in* without, of course, telling them what we want them to hang in. I hope they don't mean a tree, where a *hanging judge* might put you, unlike a hanging plant, which just hangs by itself.

But, in the end, I am grateful for all these meanings because, if someone asks, "How's it hangin'?" I can answer, "Hangin' in, hangin' on, hangin' out."

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Will Netanyahu tame Bibi?

(Continued from page 4)

that supposedly brought Obama and Netanyahu together. Netanyahu favours aggressive containment, while Obama, in his first major presidential news conference, February 9, emphasized dialogue.

"My national security team is currently reviewing our existing Iran policy, looking at areas where we can have constructive dialogue, where we can directly engage with them," Obama said. "And my expectation is, in the coming months, we will be looking for openings that can be created where we can start sitting across the table [in] face-to-face diplomatic overtures, that will allow us to move our policy in a new direction."

Netanyahu vexes his interlocutors with an agile eagerness to impress that sometimes appears to spill over into dissembling. In 2005, as finance minister, he visited the U.S. Senate to pitch his plan for a canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. He cast the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as principal beneficiaries of the plan through increased trade and employment, and the senators lapped it up.

Just minutes earlier, in the same conference room, he had told Israeli reporters in Hebrew that, as far as he was concerned, the Palestinians could take or leave participation in the project – they were marginal to its success. The fact that both conversations were on the record didn't appear to faze him.

Such manoeuvring could trip up Netanyahu, says Yoram Peri, a Tel Aviv University political scientist and visiting professor at American University in Washington.

Livni: dedication to compromise

(Continued from page 5)

Only the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) weighed in.

"We congratulate Tzipi Livni and the Kadima Party on their victory," the ADL said in a statement. "We wish Ms. Livni well as she works to form a unity government that is reflective of Israel's diverse society, committed to ensure its democratic system and can heal fissures within Israeli society, just as it will responsibly confront Israel's numerous domestic and international challenges."

Livni speaks bluntly and enjoys engaging her political enemies. At a January 16 appearance at the National Press Club in Washington toward the end of Israel's operation in Gaza, when a left-wing journalist called her a terrorist, she would not let the moderator wave off the questioner. Instead, she answered him.

"Israel has shown restraint for years, for eight years. Eight years in which our citizens, children, were under threat and attacks," she said. "We tried to avoid this operation. We showed restraint. We entered this truce, but nothing happened. But there is a huge difference and I would like the international community to make this distinction: According to any international law and the values of the international community, there's a difference between somebody who kills deliberately, a murderer, and somebody who kills by mistake."

"That's his personality," Peri said. "The major problem of Netanyahu is Bibi: in Israel, the question we ask is, 'Will Netanyahu be able to tame Bibi?'"

Others said personality issues might be subsumed by the kind of government Netanyahu cobbles together. If he includes Kadima and Labor in a centrist coalition, he might be able to break with some of the doctrines of the past. The same would not be true of a coalition with hawkish parties.

"Netanyahu allowed himself to be boxed in in the 1990s" by the right wing, said David Makovsky, a senior analyst with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Should be get a shot at forming Israel's next government, Makovsky said, Netanyahu should focus on where he wants to take the country when assembling his coalition.

"The coalition should reflect the mission, not the other way around," Makovsky said.

Peri said Netanyahu would be unlikely to stray too far from Likud doctrine when it comes to the Palestinians, considering the rise of hard-liners within the party. Instead, he suggested, a Netanyahu administration might make headway with Syria. Although Netanyahu has expressed opposition to the Israel-Syria talks revived last year, saying now is not the time to give up the Golan Heights, he came close to making such a deal when he was prime minister.

"If he wants to contain a clash with Washington" over its aggressive pursuit of peace, Peri said, "it'll be easier for him to support discussions with Syria."

Livni is not always so politic, and she does not forgive easily. Her relationship with Rice soured in the last days of the Bush administration after Rice abstained from a UN Security Council vote calling for a ceasefire that Israel believed was premature. Israel had expected her to use the U.S. prerogative to veto the call.

Livni reportedly tore into Rice, accusing her of "betraying" Israel. At a meeting in Washington several days later, Livni thanked Rice for her "leadership, support and friendship," but could not bring herself to look Rice in the eye.

Disarming in person, Livni candidly asks journalists how she performed in news conferences. She sometimes answers a question by arguing multiple points of view before settling on one.

Like Olmert, the leader she hopes to replace, Livni is the scion of a Greater Land of Israel family who, in her middle years, came to the conclusion that Israel has no choice but to relinquish land for peace. Her parents were both in the Irgun, the underground pre-state militia; her biography lends heft to her dedication to compromise.

If she is not well known in the White House, she has cultivated friends among the Democratic leadership in Congress and is considered close to Nancy Pelosi, the House of Representatives speaker.

Jewish Community Service Awards

Members of the Jewish community are invited to nominate individuals to receive the following community awards at the Annual General Meeting of the Federation in early June.

Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Service Award

The Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Service Award is the highest tribute that the Ottawa Jewish Community can bestow on an individual for exceptional service over the course of many years. Initiated in 1980, it bears the name of the late Past President of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, Gilbert Greenberg, who exemplified the qualities of leadership, which the award endeavours to recognize.

Freiman Family Young Leadership Award

The Freiman Family Young Leadership Award recognizes an individual or an organization within the Jewish community, under the age of 40, who has contributed actively to the Jewish community in the two or more years following his/her participation in the Young Leadership Development Program, or as a young leader rendered exceptional service to the Jewish community.

The Shem Tov Community Volunteer Award presented by the Ottawa Citizen

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- Rabbi Shimon

The Shem Tov Community Volunteer Award was created to recognize an outstanding and active volunteer with the Jewish community who, through many years of service, has contributed to the enrichment of Jewish life in Ottawa.

Address Recommendations by March 31, 2009 to:

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For more information, please visit www.jewishottawa.com

NOMINATION FORM (Please attach another page to tell us more)

- ☐ Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Service Award
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- ☐ Shem Tov Community Volunteer Award

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Nominee

Agency or Organization

E-mail Address

Detail community involvement and special contributions

WHAT'S GOING ON

February 23 to March 8, 2009

For more community listings,
visit ottawa.planitjewish.com



WEEKLY EVENTS

MONDAYS & THURSDAYS

Motorin' Munchkins, sponsored by Ganon Preschool, for kids aged 5 and under. Parent/caregiver-supervised playtime in gymnasium with equipment, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 280.



CANDLELIGHTING BEFORE

Feb 27 ☆ 5:28 pm
Mar 6 ☆ 5:38 pm
Mar 13 ☆ 6:47 pm
Mar 20 ☆ 6:56 pm

MONDAYS

Pizza and Parsha, sponsored by Chabad Student Network of Ottawa. University of Ottawa, University Centre, 1:00 pm. Info: 613-601-7701.

TUESDAYS

Israeli Folkdancing, learn dances, have fun, no experience necessary. Hillel Academy, 31 Nadolny Sachs Private, 6:30 pm. Info: 613-722-9323.

FRIDAYS

Shabbat Shalom, sponsored by Ganon Preschool, learn about Shabbat through crafts, stories, games and songs. Drop-in program for ages 5 and under. Parent/caregiver must accompany, 9:30 am. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 280.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

A.M. Klein: A Centenary Celebration, sponsored by University of Ottawa's Vered Jewish

Canadian Studies Program and Tree Reading Series. Evening devoted to writings and legacy of A.M. Klein, hosted by Professor Seymour Mayne with participating writers. Arts Court Library, 2 Daly Avenue, 8:00 pm. Info: 613-749-3773.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Yiddish-speaking group for seniors, sponsored by Jewish Family Services, 2255 Carling Avenue, suite 300, 12:00 pm. Info: 613-722-2225, ext. 325.

Shalom Ottawa, our community program on Rogers 22, 6:00 pm (repeated Saturday, February 28 at 12:00 pm).

Anti-Semitism after the Holocaust – the Unwelcoming of the Jewish Survivors after the War, public lecture sponsored by Carleton University's Max and Tessie Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies. Speaker: Dr. Jan T. Gross of Princeton University, an expert on Polish soci-

ety during the Second World War and the Holocaust. Carleton University, Paterson Hall, Room 303, 7:00 pm. Info: 613-520-2600, ext. 1320.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

Jetsetter Ski Night, sponsored by Jewish Education through Torah. Enjoy dinner and transportation to the slopes at Camp Fortune, 6:00 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 247.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

The Kibbittz Club, sponsored by Jewish Family Services and Congregation Beth Shalom. Lunch and entertainment. Congregation Beth Shalom, 151 Chapel Street, 12:00 pm. Info: 613-798-3501, ext. 223.

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Purim Spirit, co-sponsored by Jewish Education through Torah and the Soloway JCC. A Purim experience for the whole

family with lots of activities for kids. Dress up in costume, 1:30 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 247.

The Megillah, according to **The Beatles**: Enjoy this unique second annual fun and freilich

community-wide Purim Shpiel featuring local talent, co-sponsored by the Vered Israel Cultural and Educational Programs and the Soloway JCC. Ages 14+ are welcome, 7:30 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 254.

COMING SOON

MONDAY, APRIL 20

Community Yom HaShoah Commemoration, 7:00 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 276.

TUESDAY, APRIL 21

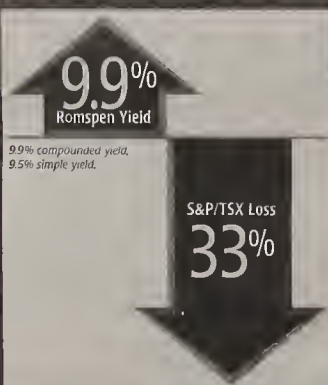
National Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony, Parliament Hill, 3:00 pm. Info: 416-785-1333.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

Yom Ha'Atzmaut 2009, celebrating Israel's 61st birthday. Ottawa Civic Centre, 5:00 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 225.

Unless otherwise noted, activities take place at The Joseph and Rose Ages Family Building, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private.

This information is taken from the community calendar maintained by the Jewish Ottawa InfoCentre. Organizations which would like their events to be listed, no matter where they are to be held, should send the information to InfoCentre coordinator Benita Sliemiatycki via e-mail at bsliemiatycki@jewishottawa.com or fax at 613-798-4695. She can also be reached by telephone at 613-798-4644. Accurate details must be provided and all events must be open to the Jewish public.



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Condolences are extended
to the families of:

Makhlouf Berros
Clara Bleet, Toronto
(mother of Marilyn
[Abe] Nadrich)
Thorey Cherney
Isadore Rose
Chick Wolfe

*May their memory
be a blessing always.*

The CONDOLENCE COLUMN
is offered as a public service
to the community.

There is no charge.

For a listing
in this column,
please call
Carolene Preap,
613-798-4696, ext. 232.

Voice mail is available.

BULLETIN DEADLINES

MARCH 4 FOR MARCH 23
MARCH 18 FOR APRIL 6
APRIL 7 FOR APRIL 27
APRIL 22 FOR MAY 11
MAY 6 FOR MAY 25
MAY 27 FOR JUNE 15
JUNE 30 FOR JULY 20

* Community-wide issue (all dates subject to change)

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